

Published: May 15, 2016, *Kokomo Tribune* [Page: A4]

http://www.kokomotribune.com/indianakokomo/editorial-evangelicals-lose-ground/article_e21cf686-194b-11e6-b9e2-53bd4dbc41b7.html

Editorial: Evangelicals lose ground

For an insight into the evangelical right's loss of efficacy in the state of Indiana, look no further than our esteemed Gov. Mike Pence. The devout Republican head of state has been grasping at straws lately, and he doesn't even seem to understand why.

During our time in the national spotlight ahead of our May 3 presidential primary, Pence made a big show of meeting with all three candidates still in the GOP race for the nomination. He finally landed on Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, behind whom he threw his full weight of support just days before the ballots were counted.

If Pence's support meant anything, it couldn't be seen in the numbers. As Cruz might say, he just wasn't able to score a touchdown through the basketball ring. Cruz was trounced by Donald Trump, to whom Pence quickly switched his facile allegiance. (Although why Pence thinks Trump needs his help is anyone's guess.)

Pence has now turned his attention to his own re-election campaign against previous challenger, Democrat John Gregg. In an Associated Press article by Brian Slodysko, which we ran on the front of Friday's paper, Pence

suggested his “candidacy represents a continuation of a vision first offered by his predecessor, former GOP Gov. Mitch Daniels.”

This is a curious tact to take since it's not as if he hasn't had a whole term in office. It's not as if his first term was uneventful. Now he asks voters to draw comparisons between his predecessor and his vision as he seeks a second term?

Pence and his team have apparently realized what has become abundantly clear to Hoosiers these past few years: The bloc of voters willing to stomach constant infringement on secular society from thinly veiled, would-be theocrats isn't as large as previously thought. If it were as forceful as advertised, Cruz would have won in a landslide, Pence would still be considered a viable national politician and his RFRA and abortion bill signings would have gone off without a hitch. Yet, Trump is the Republican nominee and Pence is in the political fight of his life.

There's a lesson to be learned here if Pence and his cohorts are open. Ignoring it will continue their slide toward irrelevancy.